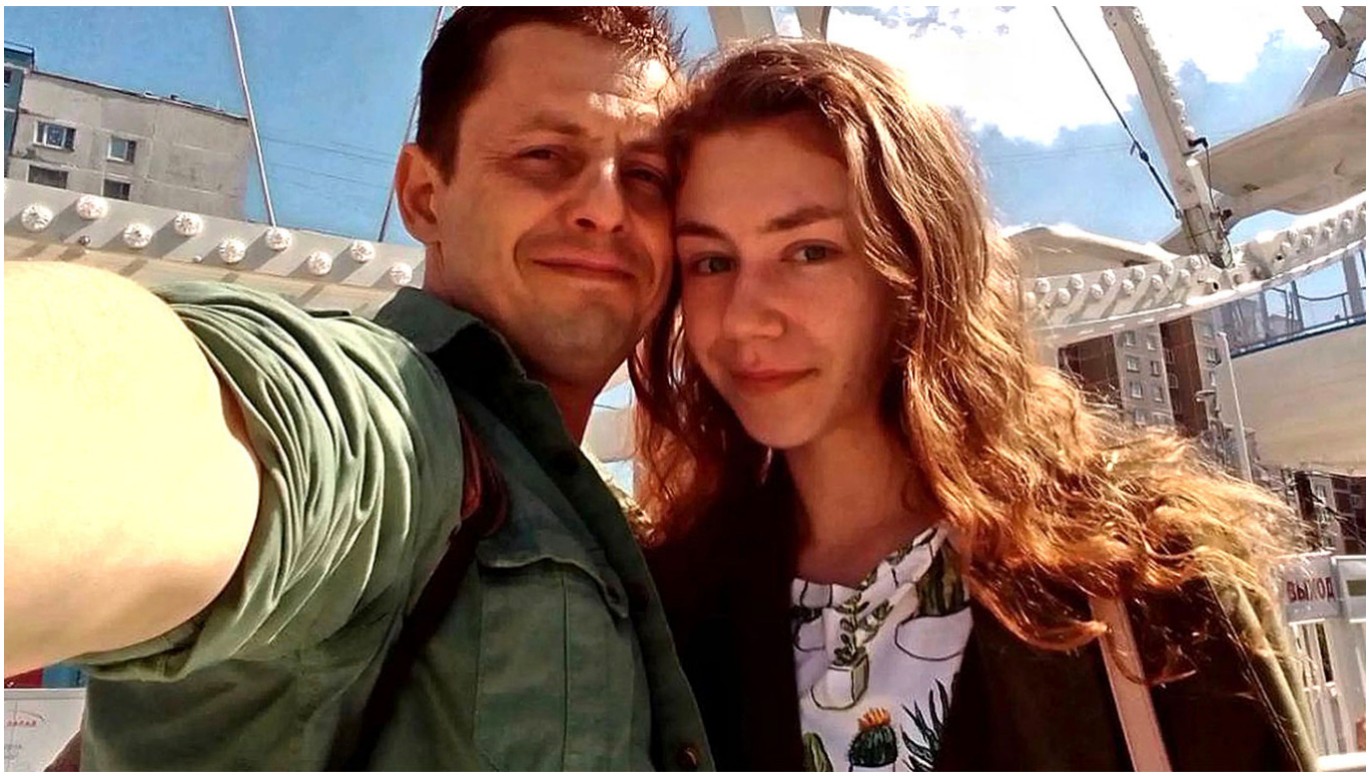
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ex-Russian State TV Reporter Sent to 'Punishment Pit' in Occupied Ukraine

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Journalist Ilya Andreyev with his wife Yana. **Social Media**

A former Russian state television correspondent is being held in a so-called "punishment pit" in occupied Ukraine, the independent Novaya Gazeta Europe news website reported Monday.

Ilya Andreyev, 42, resigned from the state-run Channel One broadcaster shortly after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. He later signed a military contract with the Russian Defense Ministry because, according to his friends, he couldn't find a job.

This month, Andreyev was sentenced to punishment in a hole dug in the ground in the occupied Luhansk region after he asked for 10 days of leave to renew his expired passport, Novaya Gazeta Europe said.

When he tried to get out of the hole, his superiors tied him Andreyev to a tree, Novaya Gazeta Europe reported.

Andreyev called his wife last week to say that he was being relocated to the punishment pit in

the village of Zaitseve in the occupied Donetsk region.

"[He got in touch] from someone else's phone because his own phone had not yet been given to him," his wife Yana told Novaya Gazeta Europe on Monday without specifying his current whereabouts.

Since Russia's so-called "partial" military mobilization in September 2022, reports have emerged of Russian conscripts being sent to basements and pits in the ground as punishment.

This month, the Astra Telegram channel reported that around 300 mobilized soldiers were being held in a basement in the village of Zaitseve for refusing to fight.

Russian authorities this month opened the first criminal case against conscripted soldiers refusing to fight in Ukraine, according to relatives as well as footage circulating on social media.

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